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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
BY THE HEAD OF THE HIGH-LEVEL PLANNING GROUP

11. (U) Post is authorized to make the following statement at the December 11 meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna.

Begin Text:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to welcome Captain Erikki Platan, Head of the High-Level Planning Group, to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report.

We appreciate the HLPG's ongoing efforts to update and maintain operational plans for an eventual OSCE peacekeeping force in the area of the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference.

We particularly welcome your initiation of discussions on planning for the non-military activities that will inherently be part of any OSCE crisis management or peacekeeping operation. This type of comprehensive approach could be ensured by the creation of an internal OSCE working group among various potential actors, including staff from ODIHR, the HCNM and the Secretariat. Political guidance should be provided by the participating States.

Regarding the staffing of the HLPG itself, we agree with the decision not to fully staff all nine positions authorized on the post table. We would suggest that all positions, except for a minimum number necessary for skeleton staffing, could be left vacant until developments in the Minsk Group Process might warrant a return to full staffing levels. We look forward to discussing this idea further within the framework of the ACMF.

Captain Platan, we thank you for your contribution to the improvement of the planning process, as well as the operational plans, which we sincerely hope can be put into practice soon.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
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